

out better than a solution from the private sector. That said, we should not stand for trading in government bureaucrats for insurance company bureaucrats. I cannot stress this enough: The ultimate decisions must be in the hands of every individual patient. Physicians should be in charge of explaining the benefits and risks of each and every test and procedure to the patients, and the patient will decide how to proceed. When necessary, the patient will consult with their insurance provider, seeking guidance about extraordinary procedures or hospital stays or whatever is required.

We must take steps to change our health care system, but socialism is not the answer. Let's work together to find solutions that are patient-focused and not government-focused.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Texas (Mr. PAUL) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. PAUL addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

#### THE \$10 BILLION LANDS BILL: ANOTHER BIG GOVERNMENT BOON-DOGGLE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Tennessee (Mr. DUNCAN) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. DUNCAN. Mr. Speaker, today the House, unfortunately, voted overwhelmingly in favor of the Senate lands bill, a \$10 billion bill that we simply cannot afford. Fortunately, it did not pass with the required two-thirds vote necessary for passage under suspension of the rules. However, all this really means is that it will now be taken up under regular order, where it should have been in the first place and which requires only a majority vote. Thus there is no question this bill will pass the next time it's taken up.

But I hope more people across this land will start thinking about what we are doing to ourselves. I realize that since we are now throwing around trillions, spending money like never before, that maybe people don't really think that \$10 billion sounds like that much anymore. But to anyone who stops to think about it, \$10 billion is still an awful lot of money, and it becomes even more when you realize that we are having to borrow all this money we're spending since we surely don't have surplus cash, and we are now 12 trillion 104 billion dollars in debt at the Federal level. I realize that 12 trillion 104 billion is an incomprehensible figure. But what it really means is that we will soon not be able to pay all of our Social Security and veterans' pensions and all the other things we promised our own people with money that will buy anything.

I used to say what we were doing to our children and grandchildren was ter-

rible. But now I believe that tough economic times, already here for many, are going to come for almost everyone in the next 10 or 15 years, if not sooner.

When a family gets deeply, head-over-heels in debt, it gets in even worse trouble if it goes out and greatly increases its spending even more. That is exactly the situation our Federal Government is in today, living way beyond its means.

This lands bill is a combination of 170 bills, which cost \$10 billion in total. In addition to that, it is a luxury that we do not need and which will be very harmful in the long run. We already are having trouble funding and taking care of the Federal lands we have now. The National Park Service claims it has a \$9 billion backlog on things it needs to do in our 379 national park units. It sounds great for a politician to create a park, but we now have so many parks at the Federal, State, and local levels that we cannot even come close to getting adequate use of them unless all of our people suddenly find a way to go on permanent vacations.

Another problem that few people think about is that we keep creating so many local and State parks, and expanding others, especially at the Federal level, that we are taking way too much land off the tax rolls. We keep decreasing private property at the same time the schools and all the other government agencies keep coming to us telling us they need more money.

These 170 bills, combined into one bill, create 2 million acres of new wilderness, 330,000 acres of national conservation areas, and restrict energy development on millions of acres.

The U.S. Chamber of Commerce says this bill "substantially hampers energy development and private property rights by withdrawing millions of acres of land from oil and gas exploration . . . shackling U.S. energy exploration and development at this critical time would substantially jeopardize America's already fragile economy."

It's going to drive up prices, utility bills, Mr. Speaker, and it's going to destroy jobs.

The Federal Government today owns about 30 percent of the land of this Nation. It has 84 million acres in the National Park System. It has 150 million acres in the Wildlife Refuge System. It has 193 million acres in the National Forest System. I could go on and on with other Federal lands, but it's not necessary.

Then State and local governments and quasi-governmental agencies control another 20 percent of the land. Half the land is now already in some type of public ownership now.

On top of all this, there are now 1,667 land trusts and 1,400 conservancy groups at least. These are figures from 2 years ago; so there may be more now. USA Today, which published these figures, said that these private trusts and conservancy groups control about 40 million acres and that they're taking over an average of more than 2½ mil-

lion more each year. These lands are eventually sold or turned over to the government at great cost to the taxpayer and causing further increases in taxes on the property that remains in private hands. Then we're putting more and more restrictions or limitations on the private property that can be developed, thus driving up the cost of homes to astronomical levels in many areas.

Mr. Speaker, we are slowly but surely doing away with private property in this country. If we don't wake up and realize that private property is one of the keys to both our prosperity and our freedom, we are going to really cause serious problems for everyone except for the very wealthy.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Virginia (Mr. GOODLATTE) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. GOODLATTE addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

#### ANNIVERSARY OF THE 1937 NATURAL GAS TRAGEDY OF NEW LONDON, TEXAS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Texas (Mr. GOHMERT) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. GOHMERT. Mr. Speaker, March 18 will mark the 72nd anniversary of what freshly graduated newscaster Walter Cronkite called the "worst school disaster in American history." I stand before the House today to commemorate those students and educators who so tragically lost their lives that afternoon as well as to encourage the survivors.

The 1930s saw many families in East Texas with hope as they fought to regain what had been lost in so many parts of the country during the Great Depression.

□ 1615

With the discovery of oil in northern Rusk County, the City of New London, Texas, boasted one of the richest rural school districts in America. They had just built a state-of-the-art school that would make any school district envious.

But at approximately 3:18 p.m. on March 18, 1937, many of those same families would lose forever the promise of youth while east Texans and people around the world would bear the pain of losing a community's entire generation.

It was on that date, at that time, the New London school did become the site of the worst school disaster in American history. In those days, natural gas had no odor. That odorless gas started leaking from a tap line and accumulated in the massive crawl space beneath the school building.

In an instant, a spark from a sanding machine in the basement ignited the gas, creating an explosion heard miles